



A STUDY ON GENDER DIFFERENCES AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ASSAM

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ABSTRACT

Academic achievement is a key mechanism through which students learn about their talents, abilities and competencies which are important parts of developing career aspirations. The present study explored the differences of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students in Assam. The sample of the study consisted of 250 students (150 male and 100 female). The main finding of the study was that gender significantly differs on academic achievement of secondary school students.

KEYWORDS: Gender Differences, Academic achievement, Secondary School, Location.

Introduction

Achievement means to accomplish or gain by effort or do something successfully with an effort or skill. Academic achievement has been seen as one of the most important goals of educational process. It has been of concern to parents, teachers, guardians, students and even the wider society. The desire for a high level of achievement puts a lot of pressure on students, teachers, schools and in general the education system itself. Therefore, academic achievement is a key mechanism through which students learn about their talents, abilities and competencies which are important parts of developing career aspirations. It is the result got by students or grades awarded to them after final evaluation. It reflects in examinations written by students after the process of learning.

Gender is one of such factors that have considerable effects on students' academic performances. In its narrowest sense, gender means socially constructed sex roles of female or male. Consequently, there might be differences on academic achievement in male and female. Gender issues are currently the main focus of discussion and research in any society. The question of gender is a matter of grave concern especially among academics and policy formulators. Intellectuals are worried about the role of male and female in the psychological, political, social, economic, religious, scientific and technological development of nations. Meanwhile, concerns about academic achievement with respect to males and females have generated a considerable interest in the field of educational testing over the years. Differences in academic achievement of the two genders are likely to contribute disparities in the allocation of cognitive roles in the world of work. Even though this research puts into questions whether gender differences still exist in academic achievement, many researchers are still finding differences in performance as well as their mental ability.

Location refers to a specific position in physical space. In the present study, location is seen as the residing within which area take place. Students refer to locate in urban and rural is classified here. There could be variations in educational opportunities of children due to location. Parents in the rural areas are poorer and less exposed than those in the urban areas. The result revealed was encouraging in relation to positive intellectual development. The children in the rural areas are not acquainted with some electrical gadgets like computers, recreational facilities such as cinemas and film shows, reading places like public libraries. These are known to enrich the education of children in urban areas and these may influence on their academic achievement. From personal observations, it seems that male students have more opportunities and access to the above mentioned facilities than the female hence the probable influence of gender.

Bora, A. (2010) in the investigation 'A study on gender differences and achievements in mathematics among the secondary school students in Karbi Anglong district of Assam' found significant difference in pass percentage between male and female students. The investigator also found that the socio-economic conditions of parents affect the gender difference in the achievements in mathematics in HSLC examination. It was also found that school proprietorship was responsible for gender differences regarding mathematics achievements. The study suggested some points to bridge the gender gap in mathematics achievement among the students of HSLC examinees in Karbi Anglong district of Assam.

Dutta, J. (2016) conducted a study on 'A comparative study on academic achievement of secondary school students in Sonitpur district of Assam'. The study revealed that secondary school students studying in government and private schools as well as belonging urban and rural areas showed differ significantly in respect of their science subject.

Significance of the Study

Secondary education is an important segment of the total educational system contributing significantly to the individual as well as to the development of the nation. A good educational institution provides environment conducive for development of cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains for all round development of individuals. Therefore the present study aimed at a new perspective, with earnest attempt to study gender differences and academic achievement of secondary school students in Assam.

Objectives of the Study

The study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

1. To study the difference of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students.
2. To study the difference of location on academic achievement between (i) rural male and female and (ii) urban male and female students.

Hypotheses

In view of the stated objectives the following hypotheses were formulated:

H₀: 1 There is no significant mean difference of gender on academic achievement of secondary school students.

H₀: 2 There is no significant mean difference of location on academic achievement between (i) rural male and female (ii) urban male and female of secondary school students.

Method & Materials

Descriptive survey method was used to conduct the study.

Population and Sample of the Study

The population of the present study constituted all the students studying class X in secondary schools in Lakhimpur district, Assam.

The sample for the study was consisted 250 students (150 males and 100 females) selected randomly from 5 higher secondary schools.

Academic achievement score was the marks obtained by the students in the Board Examination of class X.

Results and Discussion

The results have been presented in the following table:

Table:1 Showing the Mean, SD and t-value on Academic Achievement of Different Groups of Students

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	t-value	Remarks
Academic Achievement	Male	150	38.36	5.27	2.32	Significant
	Female	100	39.87	4.84		
	Rural Male	90	38.13	5.89	1.52	Not Significant
	Rural Female	60	39.42	4.46		
	Urban Male	60	38.57	3.86	2.02	Significant
	Urban Female	40	40.55	5.35		

It was found from the Table-1 that the mean score of male and female students are 38.36 and 39.87 respectively. When the t-test was applied to the test of signifi-

cance of the mean difference between these groups, it was found that the calculated t-value ($=2.32$) was greater than the table value 1.97 at 0.05 level of significance. There is significant difference in the mean score of male and female students. Comparatively, female students have higher achievement score than their male counterparts. Thus, gender has significant influence on academic achievement of secondary school students.

The table value showed that mean scores on academic achievement of rural male is 38.13 and SD is 5.89, whereas rural female students mean score is 39.42 and SD is 4.46. The computed t-value between the scores of rural male and female on academic achievement is 1.52, which is not significant. Thus, the result revealed that there is no significant difference between rural male and female students on academic achievement.

The result from the Table-1, it was revealed that the mean scores of urban male and urban female students are 38.57 and 40.55 respectively. When the t-test was applied to compare the mean scores of both group, it was found that the calculated t-value ($=2.02$) is greater than the table value. This means that the mean difference is significant. Hence, the hypothesis is accepted. This further means that urban male and female students do differ in performance level.

Conclusion

Witfully analysis and interpretation of the results, it has been found that there was a real gender difference on academic achievement of secondary school students in Assam. The male students have lower academic performance in comparison to female students in secondary level. This means that female students are found better on academic achievement than male students which reflects the advantages taken by female students from the government policies. On the other hand, urban male student spends more of their free time in the virtual world. Reading proficiency is the basis upon which all other learning is built. Female are more apt to plan ahead, set academic goals and put effort into achieving their goals. Therefore more facilities are now given to female in education. As a result the literacy rates of females increase more steadily than the males in population. There is a great change in the outlook of parents for sending their girls to schools.

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